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A Cosmopolitan Group of Muslims and non-Muslim friends, breaking the record of all such previous gatherings, met to celebrate the birthday of the Holy Prophet, on Thursday, September 12, 1929, at 8 p.m., at Stewart's Restaurant, Old Bond Street, London, W.1, under the auspices of the British Muslim Society, London.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
مُحَمَّدٌ وَصَلَّى عَلَى رَسُولِ الْكَرِيمِ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

JUMĀDA 'TH-THĀNIYA, 1348 A.H.
VOL. XVII. NOVEMBER, 1929 A.C. No. II

MUHAMMAD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

By PROFESSOR 'ABDU 'L-AHAD DĀWŪD, B.D.

I

ISLAM AND AHMADIYĀT ANNOUNCED BY ANGELS

Two very extraordinary events have been recorded by two Evangelists in connection with the birth of Sayyidinā Jesus Christ (upon whom be peace and the blessings of Allah). The Evangelist Mattai (Matthew) has left to us an account of the wonderful pilgrimage of the Magi, who were guided by a star from Persia to the manger at Bethlehem, where the new-born Jesus, whom they "worshipped" and presented with rich gifts of gold, myrrh, and incense, was lying. The condensed material in this historical event or fictitious story of the "Wise Men" from the East is in itself a plausible legend consisting of more than half a dozen miracles, which the Christian Church alone has been able to create and to believe in. The Church has preserved the very names of the Magi, who, headed by the King Caspar, were "inspired by God," and knew that the little Babe of Bethlehem was God, Lamb, and King, and there-

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fore they offered him incense as to a deity, myrrh for his burial as a sacrifice, and gold for his royal treasury! That the Zoroastrian magicians, or the astrologian Chaldees, through the astral divination and guidance, traversed all that distance to Jerusalem, and there lost the sight of the star; that the Jewish reigning sovereign Herod and the inhabitants of Jerusalem shook and trembled at the news of the birth of a new king; that only an incoherent passage in the writings of the Prophet Micah (v. 2) could solve the problem of the locality where the nativity had taken place; and finally that the astrologers were informed by God in a dream not to return to Herod, are indeed some wonderful miracles which only the Christian superstition can swallow. The royal retinue of the pilgrims proceeds to Bethlehem only at a few miles' distance from Jerusalem, and, lo! the old guiding star again appears and leads them on until it stops exactly above the spot where the infant was born. The prodigious rapidity with which the long journey from Persia to Bethlehem was completed while the babe was still in the stable (Luke ii. 4-7) shows the importance of the miracle. Another miracle connected with the birth of Christ is the fact, or the fiction, that after all those demonstrations at the Court of Herod and in the educated classes at Jerusalem, nobody knew the address of the Holy Family; and that this mystifying ignorance cost the massacre by Herod of hundreds of infants at Bethlehem and its suburbs. The last but not the least miracle insinuated in this narrative is the fulfilment of another prophecy from Jeremiah (xxxi. 15), where Rachel is represented as weeping and lamenting over the slaughter of the Ephraimites at Ramah *and not at Bethlehem*, and this, too, some seven hundred years ago, when the descendants of Rachel were deported into Assyria while she herself was dead long before Jacob her husband descended into Egypt! St. Matthew, who alone among all the ancient archivists and historians knows this event, does not tell us what the impressions of King Caspar and his astrologers after their visit of pilgrimage to the manger of Bethlehem were. Were they convinced that the son of Mary was a king, or were they not? If they were persuaded that Jesus was a king, why

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then did Persia persecute Christianity until it was converted to Islam in the seventh century? Is it not true that the Persians received no light and information about Jesus of Nazareth from their magicians, but only from the Muslim army sent by Hazrat Omar, the second caliph?

It is not my intention to deny altogether the truth of the visit of some Eastern Magi to the crypt of Jesus, but simply to show the avidity or the ambition of the Church to exaggerate simple events in the life of Jesus Christ and to exhibit in them some supernatural characteristics.

The other equally wonderful event which concerns our present discourse is recorded by the Evangelist Luke (ii. 1-20). Some shepherds were watching their flocks in a field near Bethlehem on the very night when Jesus was born in a manger. An angel announces the birth of the "Saviour Lord," and suddenly a host of angels appear in the sky and sing aloud the following hymn:

Glory be to God in the Highest,
And on earth peace,
And among men good will. [Verse 14.]

This famous angelic anthem, known as *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, and sung in all the sacerdotalist churches during their celebration of the sacraments, is, unfortunately, only a vague translation from the Greek text, which cannot be considered at all reliable or trustworthy because it does not show us the original words in the language in which the angels chanted and which the Hebrew shepherds understood. That the heavenly hosts sang their joyous song in the language of the shepherds, and that that language was *not* Greek but the vernacular Hebrew—or rather the Aramaic—is an admitted truth. All the scriptural names of Allah, angels, heaven, prophets, etc., are revealed to us in the Semitic tongues (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic); and to imagine that the celestial hosts sang in Greek to the ignorant Jewish shepherds in the suburbs of Bethlehem would be equivalent to the belief that such an angelic army, in the firmament above the mountains of Kurdistan, sang a similar hymn in the Japanese for the digestion, or puzzle, of some Kurdish herdsmen!

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The appearance of an angel to the humble shepherds of Bethlehem and the annunciation of the birth of a great Prophet that very night, and the hearing of the angelic Hallelujah (Allilujah) by *them* alone and not by the haughty priests and the scribes, is one of the innumerable miracles recorded in the history of the people of Israel. There is nothing in the story which might be considered to be of such a contradictory nature as to expose the narrative to incredibility. An angel can appear to a prophet or a holy servant of God and communicate to him a message from Allah in the presence of other people, yet be quite imperceptible to them. The good shepherds had good hearts and good faith; therefore they were worthy of the divine favour. So from a religious point of view there is nothing incompatible or incredible in this wonderful event as recorded by St. Luke. The author of this narrative exhibits precision of diction, he is discreet and cautious in his statements, and throughout his Gospel he uses a very good Greek style. Considering the fact that he wrote his book long after the death of all the Apostles, and that he had "very carefully" examined numerous works concerning Jesus and his Gospel, it seems very probable that he was aware of the legend of the Magi and abstained altogether from including it in his own book.¹ It is precisely stated in the first four verses with which the third Gospel opens that the Apostles, whom he calls "the eyewitnesses and the ministers of the Word," had *not* written *themselves* any account about the Master and his teachings, but only by way of tradition had delivered them orally to their followers or successors. It is also clearly stated that the sources to which St. Luke had recourse for the composition of his Gospel were various "stories" composed by persons who had heard them narrated by the Apostles and others who were the eyewitnesses of those events and doctrines, and that the author very attentively examined them all and chose only such as he considered true or trustworthy. Moreover, it is quite evident from the confession of St. Luke himself, as it may be easily deduced from his preface,

¹ Readers are advised to very carefully read the preface, or the introductory passage, at the beginning of St. Luke's Gospel.

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that he claims no direct revelation made to himself, nor does he attribute any inspiratory character to his book. It may, too, be safely assumed that the first and the fourth Gospels were either not written when Luke compiled his own narrative, or that he had not seen them; for he could not have ventured to counterpoise or contradict the Gospels written by the two Apostles, Matthew and John.

These brief observations, which can be multiplied, must convince every impartial reader that the so-called "Four Gospels" do not exhibit the necessary features which are indispensable for any Scripture claiming a divine inspiration.

The Churches have believed that the author of the third Gospel is the Physician Luke (Col. iv. 14) who accompanied St. Paul in his missionary journeys and was with him a prisoner at Rome (2 Tim. iv. 11; Philem. 24, etc.). However, this is not the place to discuss the question of the authorship of the book, nor its other important peculiarities. Suffice it to say that St. Luke has recorded some beautiful parables and teachings of the Holy Master, such as the parable of the Good Samaritan (x. 25-37); the Avaricious Rich Man (xii. 15-21); the Self-righteous Pharisee and the Publican (xiii. 9-18); the Perseverance in Prayer (xi. 1-13); the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son (xv.); the Dives and Lazarus (xvi. 19-31); the Mite of the Poor Widow (xxi.); the Wicked Husbandman (xx. 9-16); the Unjust Judge (xviii. 1-8); the Conversion of Zacchaeus (xix. 1-10); and several others. But the most important among all the contents of the third Gospel is the angelic hymn, which forms the topic of our present study and contemplation.

This hymn, like all the contents of the New Testament, is presented to us *not* in the original language in which it was sung, but only in its Greek version; and God alone knows the source from which our Evangelist copied, translated, or simply narrated it from hearsay.

Is it possible that Jesus or his Apostles did not leave a real and authentic Gospel in the language in which it was revealed? If there were such a true Gospel, what became of it? Who lost it? Was it destroyed? And by whom and

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when? Was it ever translated into Greek or into another foreign language? Why has not the Church preserved to us the original text of the real Gospel, or its translation? If the answer to these questions is in the negative, then we venture to ask another series of questions of equal importance; namely, Why did these Jewish Apostles and Evangelists write *not* in their own language but all of them in the Greek language? Where did the fisherman Shimon Kipha (Simon Peter), Yohannan (John), Yá'qūb (James), and the publican Mattai (Matthew) learn the Greek language in order to write a series of "holy Scriptures"? If you say the "Holy Ghost taught them," you simply make yourselves ridiculous. The Holy Ghost is not a teacher of grammar and languages. It would require another Revelation to expound the reason or wisdom why the Holy Ghost should make a revelation in the Jewish language to an Israelite in Nazareth, then cause it to be destroyed, and finally teach half a dozen Jews the Greek tongue and inspire each one to write in his own style and way a portion of the same Revelation!

If it be argued that the Gospels and the Epistles were written for the benefit of the Jews of Dispersion, who knew the Greek language, we venture to inquire: What benefit at all did those Jews of the Dispersion derive from the New Testament; and why a copy of it should not have been made for the Jews of Palestine in their own language, considering the fact that Jerusalem was the centre of the new Faith, and James, the "brother of the Lord" (Gal. i. 19), was the President or Head of the Church and residing there (Acts xv.; Gal. ii. 11-15, etc.).

It would be a desperately hopeless effort to find a single parable, oracle, or any revealed message of Jesus Christ in his own language. The Synod of Nicea must be for ever held criminally responsible as the sole cause of this irreparable loss of the Sacred Gospel in its original Aramaic text.

The reason why I so pertinently insist on the indispensable necessity of the intact preservation of the revealed message of Allah is obvious; it is because only such a document can be considered as reliable and valid. A translation, no matter

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how faithfully and ably it may have been made, can never maintain the *exact* force and the *real* sense as contained in the original words and expressions. Every version is always liable to be disputed and criticized. These four Gospels, for instance, are not even a translation, but the very original text in the Greek language; and the worst of it is that they are badly corrupted by later interpolations. ✓

Now, we have before us a sacred song, undoubtedly sung in a Semitic dialect, but as it is, presented to us in a Greek version. Naturally we are very curious to know its words in the original language in which it was sung. Here I draw the serious attention of the reader to the exact equivalent Semitic term rendered into the Greek language *eudokia* and translated into English "good will." The hymn is composed of three clauses. The subject of the first clause is Allaha (in Aramaic), rendered "Theos" in Greek. The subject of the second clause is Shlama (in Aramaic), and translated "Eiriny" into Greek. And the subject of the third clause is *eudokia* in Greek, and rendered "Bona voluntas" by the Vulgate and "Sobhra Tabha" (pronounced sōvrā ṭāwā) by the Pshittha (al-Bāsīt).

Both these versions, which have been followed by all other versions, have failed to convey the exact meaning and the sense of the word "*eudokia*," and consequently the second and the third clauses remain meaningless and even senseless, if not altogether untrue. Disappointed as we may be for not having the exact words of this heavenly anthem in their original forms, yet we need not despair in our endeavour to find out and discover the true sense contained in it.

We shall therefore proceed to find out the true etymological significations of the Greek words "Eiriny" and "Eudokia," and the real sense and interpretation of the Angelical Doxology.

The Christian interpretation of the terms "Eiriny" and "Eudokia" is wrong and utterly untenable.

According to the interpretation of this hymn by all the Christian Churches and sects, the faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ, in the redemption from sin and hell-fire through his death upon the Cross, and in holding a continual communi-

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cation with the Holy Ghost, brings "peace" and tranquillity to the heart, and makes the believers entertain towards each other "good will," benevolence, and mutual love. This interpretation, thus far, is commonly accepted by the Sacramentarian and the Evangelical groups. But they do not stop at these three principal points, and very discreetly too; for thus far no general peace, no reconciliation, no concord and union, no good will and mutual love is felt among them. Then they part with each other and try other means to ascertain this "peace" and this "good will." The Sacramentarians insist on the belief in seven sacraments and many dogmas which neither common sense nor the simple doctrine of Jesus could tolerate. The Church, having been cleansed by the blood of the Redeemer through the mysteriously sanctified waters of Baptism, has become the Bride of the Lamb and his body; the Church, being herself the body of the Lamb, feeds upon his body in the mysteriously hallowed bread and wine, and transubstantiated into the real flesh and blood of the Bridegroom. The Bride—Church—has particular devotions to the "sacred hearts" of Jesus, of Mary, and of St. Joseph; to the fourteen stages or mansions of the Crucifixion; to the statues and images of hundreds and hundreds of saints and martyrs; to thousands of authentic or fictitious bones and relics of the same; and adoration to the consecrated wafer *exactly* as to God the Almighty! Still there is no peace; all sins, grave or otherwise, must be confessed to the priest; and it is the absolution that the sinner obtains from that "spiritual father" that produces peace and tranquillity in his heart, and fills it with good will!!!

If we turn to the evangelical group of diverse creeds and tenets, we shall find them endeavouring to procure an internal peace by praying directly to the three persons of the deity individually—now to Jesus, now to the Spirit, then to the Father—with closed eyes, but with oratorical gestures and movements; by reading the Bible, and by other practices private or in public; and then they believe that they are filled with the Holy Spirit and are at peace! But I assure the reader that all these "penitent" Christians, who through their real

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or artificial devotions pretend to have obtained "peace," and to have possessed "good will" towards their neighbours, instead of becoming docile, meek, and peaceful like their pretended Master, become extremely bigoted and intolerant. Whether an orthodox or a heterodox, when a Christian comes out from the church where he has "shared" the "Lord's Communion" which they call the "Institution of the Eucharist,"¹ they become so hypocritically fanatics and unsocial as to prefer to meet a dog rather than a Muslim or a Jew, because these do not believe in the Trinity and in the "Lord's Supper." I *know* it. I used to be of the same sentiments when I was a Catholic priest. The more I thought myself spiritual, holy, and sinless, the more I hated the heretics, especially the non-believers in the Trinity.

When the Christians, especially their priests and pastors, become fervent and zealous in their peculiar devotions and practices, they become exceedingly excited, furious, and offensive towards their religious adversaries! Show me a single Catholic, Schismatic, or a heretical Saint after the Nicene Council, who was not a tyrant, either in his writings, or preachings, or in his deeds against those whom he considered "heretics." The Roman Inquisition is an immortal witness to the fulfilment of this Angelical hymn of "Peace upon earth and good will among men"!


It is apparent that the *true peace* cannot be acquired by artificial means. There are only three means that can procure the true and perfect peace; namely, a firm belief in the absolute oneness of Allah; a complete submission and resignation to His Holy Will; and frequent meditation and contemplation on Him. He who has recourse to these three means is a real and practical Muslim, and the peace that he acquires thereby is *true* and *unartificial*. He becomes tolerant, honest, just, and compassionate; but at the same time quite equipped to *fight* heart and soul in defence of all that appertains to the glory of Allah and to his own honour when threatened or attacked.

¹ I forgot to mention above that St. Luke, according to the ancient Pshitha Version, does not contain verses 17-19 of chapter xxii; nor are these so-called "essential words" existing in the Liturgy of the Nestorians.

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It is obvious that the acquisition of this *perfect* peace is accomplished by an inward faith and an inflexible submission to the Creator, and *not* by outward ostentatious practices and rituals. These latter will benefit us *only* when the faith is genuine, and the submission voluntary and unconditional.

But surely the angels did not sing in honour of private or individual peace, which is, after all, limited to a comparatively small number of godly men; nor did they do so in praise of an imaginary universal peace, which would mean a total disarmament of nations and a cessation of wars and hostilities. No; neither of these two specific peaces was the object of this melody. The spiritual peace is a tranquillity of heart and conscience granted by Allah as a grace and blessing only to those few believers who have made great progress in piety and spiritual life, and love Him, above all, and sacrifice every other love for His.

It was neither a social nor political peace for the people of Israel; for the history of the last twenty centuries shows the very contrary. The angels could not, therefore, sing and announce a peace which could never be realized or accomplished. We are forced, then, in face of the subsequent historical facts on the one hand, and by the importance of the occasion, as well as the quarter from which this remarkable announcement was made, on the other, to conclude that this "peace upon earth" was none other than the approaching establishment of the Kingdom of Allah upon earth, which is *Islam*. The Greek word "Eiriny" stands for the Semitic "Shalom," "Shlama," and "Islam." That is all! 

The very mention of "a multitude of heavenly hosts" gives the hymn a martial or triumphal character. It is indeed a singular indication of joy on the part of the armies belonging to the Kingdom of Heaven, in favour of their future allies belonging to the Kingdom of God on earth, of which the newly born Babe of Bethlehem was the greatest Evangelist and Herald.

On various occasions, in the course of these articles, we have explained that Shalom, in its concrete and practical sense, has the signification of the religion that is good, sound,

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safe, salutary, and the way of peace, in opposition to the religion that is evil, bad, harmful, destructive, and the way that conducts towards misery and perdition. It was in this sense that Allah, in His Message through the prophecy of Isaiah (xlv.) to Cyrus, used the word *Shalom*, as synonymous with good in opposition to evil. This is precisely the literal, etymological, moral, and practical interpretation of Islam as the true religion, the powerful Kingdom of Allah on earth, with its permanent and sound laws and directions inscribed in the Holy Qur-án.

Beyond Islam, which literally signifies "making peace," any other interpretation or imaginary peace is irrelevant with the sense in which "Eiriny" is used in this triumphal angelic anthem. It was in this Islamic sense of the word that Jesus Christ, in his grand sermon on the Mount, said: "Blessed are the Muslims (literally, "the peacemakers"): for they shall be called the Children of God" ¹ (Matt. v. 9). And it was precisely the imaginary peace which Sayyidinā Jesus Christ repudiated when he exclaimed: "Think not that I came to establish peace upon earth; I did not come to set peace but a sword" (Matt. x. 34-6); or, as Luke declares: "I came to set fire on the earth. . . . Do you think that I came to establish peace? I tell you, no; but divisions . . ." (Luke xii. 49-53).

Unless "Eiriny" (εἰρήνη) be understood in the sense of the Religion of Islam, these two crucial and contradictory statements of Jesus must remain a riddle, if not an irretrievable injury which the Christian Church has committed in having accepted these Gospels as the "inspired Word of God."

PRESENT-DAY CHRISTIANITY CRITICIZED AT WOKING MOSQUE

"NOTHING BUT MITHRAISM"

REMARKABLE theories of the sources of Christianity, as it exists at the present day, were advanced by the Imām in the course of a lecture entitled "The Church

¹ The expression "children of God" will be treated later on.

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Mysteries and the Religion of Jesus," at the Woking Mosque, on Sunday afternoon. The building was well filled, those present including a fair attendance of English people.

After a prayer had been recited and a portion of the Qur-án read, the speaker, who is the Imām of the Mosque, said it might be a matter of surprise to them when he said that Muslims believed in the Divine Message of Jesus. They did accept him as one of the prophets, and revered him as they did their own prophet, Muhammad. They did not make any distinction between the two, as they both brought the same message of the law. Sometimes, said the lecturer, they had to criticize and take exception to the teachings of the Church, and it might seem to some of them an anomaly why he chose that as his subject. It was admitted on all hands that if they eliminated the miracles of Jesus and other impressions from the Gospels, they would find his life epitomized in three or four pages. These were still a guidance and light to any seeker of the truth. Present-day Christianity, said the Imām, which passed under that name, gave a very different idea. Jesus believed in one God, and when these words came from the scribe, Jesus, in reply, was clear in emphasizing the oneness of God. The lecturer proceeded to read passages from the Sermon on the Mount, referring to the necessity of people loving God and their neighbours. The present-day Church had confuted and confused these laws, and they would find in the revised Prayer Book that the ten commandments would be curtailed into six.

SINS OF ADAM AND EVE

They were told that sin was innate in their nature, and that they were suffering from the wrongs done by their first parents, Adam and Eve. Why should they, the Imām asked, be punished for a sin committed by Adam and Eve? Was it reasonable? The Imām went on to speak of the things that had "crept into" the religion of Jesus during the first two centuries. Everything that was going on in Paganism at that time came into Christianity. Jesus, the speaker declared, was never born on December 25th. It was the popular date of the birth of the sun. He might have been crucified, but the crucifixion did not take place on Good Friday before Easter Sunday. He might have resurrected, but the resurrection did not take place on Easter Sunday. To-day's Christianity was nothing to do with Jesus, the lecturer alleged. What was taught by

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Jesus was dead and gone. What they were told to believe now was nothing but Mithraism.

Speaking of the entrance of modernism into the Church of England, the Imām said that the Bishop of Birmingham was disgusted with the mysteries of the Church, and clearly preached in a sermon that all these mysteries and sacraments were nothing but an inspiration of the Pagan cults. Did they know that the cross, which was a symbol of new life, was worshipped four thousand years before Christ came to the earth? They, as Muslims, resented these things, because the name of the beloved Jesus had been soiled.

We quote the following from *The Sources of Christianity*. It will help the reader to appreciate the remarks of the learned Imām in his identifying the present-day Christianity with Mithraism. The book has received favourable notice from the Press and the public here. It contains many other parallels between the Church mysteries and those of the sun-worship cult.

“Mithraism came from Persia, where it seems to have been flourishing for about six hundred years, the cult reaching Rome about 70 B.C. It spread through the Empire, and extended to Great Britain. Remains of Mithraic monuments have been discovered at York, Chester and other places. Mithra was believed to be a great *Mediator between God and man*. *His birth took place in a cave on December 25th. He was born of a virgin. He travelled far and wide; he had twelve disciples; he died in the service of humanity. He was buried, but rose again from the tomb. His resurrection was celebrated with great rejoicing.*¹ His great festivals were the Winter Solstice and the Vernal Equinox—Christmas and Easter. He was called *Saviour*, and sometimes figured as a *Lamb*. People were initiated into his cult through *baptism*. *Sacramental feasts* were held in his remembrance. These statements may excite surprise in the mind of the reader of to-day; he may be disposed to doubt their genuineness, as while on one side he reads the story of the Jesus of the Church, of the legend of Mithra on the other, Mithraism has left no traces in the world, though it was so powerful in the third century A.D. that, had it not been suppressed in Rome and Alexandria by the

¹ Robertson, *Pagan Christs*, p. 338.

Christians with physical force, as has been admitted by St. Jerome, it would have left no chance for the flourishing of Christianity; and that it died only when most of its legends became incorporated in the simple faith of Jesus,¹ and the Church lore fully saturated with Mithraic colours, so much so that Tertullian had to admit the fact, though in a way befitting his position. He says that the learned in his days considered Mithraism and Christianity identical in all but name. St. Jerome and other Early Fathers became puzzled at the similarity existing between the two faiths, but their ingenuity ascribed it to the machinations of the Devil to mock their faith."

EUROPE'S DEBT TO ISLAM

By GUSTAV DIERCKS, PH.D.

(Continued from October (1929), "*Islamic Review*," p. 375.)

THE CALIPHS

The preference of the Arabs to the vanquished peoples—which from the standpoint of the Caliph was natural enough—X evoked great indignation under the last Caliph. Especially was this to be noticed in the case of Persia. The last Sassanides had already in every conceivable way tried to strengthen and consolidate the national self-consciousness. They had, while working against Buddhism and Christianity, vivified the Zoroastrian belief anew. They had struggled hard to save Persia, both politically and culturally, from the corruption into which it had fallen, with a view to a national regeneration. In everything else they had succeeded; the Persian armies had successfully fought the Byzantine forces, and a new era already seemed to have dawned for Persia. Then into the newly rejuvenated Kingdom of Persia broke the Arab armies and destroyed it. The powerful land-owning nobility—the Dihkâns—were forced to humble themselves before the uncouth sons of the desert, to acknowledge them as masters, to make over to them the yield of all their fertile possessions, and generally to lose their independence.

The resentment which filled them soon spread to the whole

¹ Robertson, *Pagan Christs*, p. 350.

EUROPE'S DEBT TO ISLAM

of the nation, all of which, coming from the Indo-Germanic stock, differed fundamentally in nature from the Semitic Arabs. Through the next development which the state of affairs in Persia had to undergo—when the population was divided into three classes, of which the first consisted of the true Arabs, the second of those who had accepted Islam, and the third of the non-Muslims—the contrasts soon came to a crisis and gave rise to many risings and even rebellions among the Persians. Their Indo-Germanic way of thought revolted, struggling manfully against Islam, its teachings, and many of its interdictions—such as music, dancing, and the drinking of wine. The Persians have always been inclined to heterodoxy, freedom of thought, and secularization, so they became the champions of the Shiite or free conception of Islam; and because 'Alī and his family had been driven into the back-ground by the orthodox, they espoused his cause in opposition to the strict orthodox Sunni schools of thought, looked upon 'Alī as the first rightful Caliph, and raised him to a saint, in whose honour they established cults and were loyal to his descendants as the true Imāms. 'Omar himself, however, fell by the dagger of a fanatical Persian who wanted to revenge on him the unhappiness and misfortune which had overtaken his people and his country.

With the accession of the third caliph, 'Osmān (644-656), a fateful nepotism began to prevail. The caliph's relations were entrusted with highly paid sinecures, and in the place of this independence, which was an essential characteristic of the first caliphs, came unbridled self-seeking and greed; and even if we admit that the old Caliph 'Osmān was himself not noticeably affected by selfish aims, it is still very certain that his relatives, the governors, field-marsals, and other officials tried their utmost to exploit those under them with a view to personal gain. Many of the regulations issued by 'Osmān were set at naught, and it was the constant effort of the fortunately placed officials to get possession of large tracts of land so that they might make themselves as independent as possible. The provincials, on their part, even if they had accepted Islam, were driven more and more into a state of

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independence of their Arabian rulers and found themselves soon in a position corresponding somewhat to that of the Roman client towards his patron or the European and early Persian feudal system. The Persian nobility, after their acceptance of Islam, tried as much as possible to compensate themselves for the loss of the property which they had forfeited by capturing influential administrative posts. But, nevertheless, it was not until the time of the Abbasides that they succeeded in attaining anything like equality of social status with the Arabs.

Now the armies of the Caliph penetrated still farther under the rule of 'Osmān and conquered vast territories, so that the boundaries of the kingdom stretched from Carthage to the Indus; but in the interior it was already fermenting, seething dangerously, and 'Osmān himself was the victim of a conspiracy against his life, in which 'Alī was also involved.

His death was at once the signal for a succession of wars, which were henceforward to be waged between the followers of 'Osmān and those of 'Alī, and developed into terrible civil struggles, fought with the deadliest peril to the life of the Empire. Mu'āwiya, a great-grandson of Omayya, was a confirmed enemy of 'Alī, and under the pretext of avenging 'Osmān's fate he preached a holy war against the new caliph, who had bitter foes in 'Āyesha, the widow of Muhammad, and in Talha and Zubair, the flight-companions of the Prophet. 'Alī was, at the outset, victorious, and after he had subdued 'Āyesha in 657, he turned his attention to Mu'āwiya, defeating him (Mu'āwiya) in several battles. In order to save himself from utter collapse, this Syrian Governor (Mu'āwiya), who had been posing as the rival caliph, made use of a ruse which brought the battle to an end and resulted in the appointment of an arbiter, who declared both the opponents ineligible for the office of Caliph. Mu'āwiya being adjudged lawful, legitimate caliph. The new battles evoked by this step so shook the State that three fanatics agreed to kill the three causes of the trouble, 'Alī, Mu'āwiya, and 'Amrū the Governor of Egypt, simultaneously. But it was the first alone who fell to the assassin's dagger in 661; Mu'āwiya was formally

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elected the caliph; and Hasan, the son of 'Alī, to whom the followers of the latter paid homage, was compelled to abdicate.

The transference of the seat of the caliphate to Syria (Damascus) opened up straightway a channel for Byzantine influence, traces of which we find not only in the further progress of Arabian political life, but also in the development of Arabian culture during this period. The boundaries of the kingdom were continually being extended. Under Mu'āwiya I the Arabs penetrated as far as the territories of Oxus and Jaxartes, laid siege for many years, one after another, to the city of Constantinople; under 'Abdu 'l-Malik they conquered Armenia, destroyed Carthage, overran the whole of Northern Africa, and in 711 occupied Spain.

The patriarchial simplicity of the early times now disappeared. The huge State incomes were wasted in a most extravagant fashion. The love of pomp, effeminacy, and greed sapped the strength of the Arabs, which till then had been unimpaired, and led inevitably to the downfall of the Omayyid dynasty. Only one member of this great family, 'Abdu 'r-Rahmān, continued to save himself, and founded in 759 in Granada a caliphate which was independent of the Orient and soon eclipsed it.

With the Abbasides the Empire's centre of gravity was transferred to the Persian cultural sphere, when Baghdad, founded by Mansūr, was made the capital. The great extension of territory which the Empire attained in this third period (750-1258) necessitated an ever-expanding system of administrative machinery. For this purpose, once again, the Persian institutions were taken as the pattern, just as we notice everywhere Persian influences in all branches of culture, which culture, in its blossoming period under Hārūnu 'r-Rashīd (786-809) and Māmūn (813-833), sprang entirely from Persian soil. Persian, too, was the wazārat, which as soon as it had become hereditary and undermined the power of the caliph resulted in the wazīrs (viziers) growing gradually all-powerful, and becoming masters even of the caliphs themselves. Certainly there were amongst the viziers, especially the Barmakites, many very great statesmen, who were devoted to the cause

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of culture. When, in order to counterbalance the powers of the viziers, the caliphs created a Turkish bodyguard they laid the foundations of an evil no less far-reaching; for it was not long before these troops usurped to themselves great powers, and the selfsame signs which we detect in the Roman Empire during its last phase of development when the Praetorians were all-powerful, were to be seen here also. The Turkish bodyguard made and unmade caliphs, and left them only so much of power as caprice suggested. The Caliph Rādī (934-940) tried to remedy this corroding and progressing evil when he allowed the Turks to take a personal part in the affairs of the Government. He separated the spiritual rôle of the caliph from the worldly one entrusting the latter to an Amīru 'l-Umara (Prince of the Princes), for which position he selected a Turk, Ibn Rayek, and reserving for himself the spiritual power. With this step he really surrendered the government of the Empire and made the caliph a mere high-priest whose duty consisted in performing the public-prescribed prayers. When, after a few years, the Buīds made the Imārat hereditary in their house its significance corresponded almost exactly to that of the Frankish institution of *Majores domus*. More than ever before, the Governors of the provinces strove and plotted for a complete independence, and thus piece after piece broke away from the mighty Caliphate Empire which existed but in name and was only loosely kept together through the nominal bond of Islam. The Turks and the Seljūks helped each other zealously in the work of disruption, till finally the Mongol Khan, Halākū, conquered Baghdad in 1258 and the outward existence of the caliphate was brought to an end.

The most significant dynasties which gradually detached themselves from the rule of the caliphates were those of the Idrīsīs in Fez; the Aghlabites in Kairoan and Tunis, who had also conquered Sicily and Corsica, and even threatened Rome; the Tulunides and Ikshidids in Egypt and Syria; the Fatmids who ruled over Egypt from 969 to 1171; the Almoravids and Almohads in West Africa and Spain; the Saffarids and Tahīrids in Khorāsān and Sijistan; the Samanids in Buchārā and Ghaznavids in India whose kingdom stretched from the

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Ganges to the Caspian Sea and who in India created an outstanding culture, upon which the old Indian culture has exerted considerable influence.

The ancient commercial relations of the Arabs with Central Africa, and later those of the Indian Muslims with East African and the insular peoples, prepared the ground for Islam even in those far-off lands, and to-day it is spreading in the Pacific ever farther and farther, because it is readily intelligible even to the lower comprehension of uncivilized peoples; because it is perfectly in accord with climatic conditions, more so, indeed, than any other religion, and at the same time does not make excessive demands on those who profess it. Chaillé-Long, in his book *l'Afrique Centrale*, where he describes his expedition to Victoria Nyanza, has observed that the Arabs have even penetrated to that place, and judging from his remarks on the type of negro to be found there, one must presume that actually a mixture between the Arabs and the negroes must have taken place in much earlier times. Thus we meet the Arabs, and with them Islam also, in the most distant countries, in which the teachings of the Prophet became an invaluable cultural factor in that it turned the nations from uncouthness and barbarism, raised them to a worthy stage of human development, and gave them the plain principles of a simple moral teaching.

THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD— HIS CONVERSATION AND CHEER- FULNESS

IN his speech the Prophet was more eloquent and fluent than others. He was short and sweet in his talks. Whenever he talked he was laconic; his talk was arranged like a string of pearls. Aisha says: "The Prophet did not speak much, as you people do; he spoke a little, while you expand your expressions. His conversation was abbreviated above all others, and he could bring into a small compass whatever he liked. He used general terms, neither widening nor narrowing the

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meaning, and words like pearls on a string came one after another. During the conversation there were short breaks so that the hearers might be able to remember it. His voice was loud and the tone elegant above the rest. He was very taciturn, and never talked but when occasion demanded it. He never used a bad word, and when annoyed he never uttered anything but the truth. He turned his back upon him who used foul language. If he was forced to use an unpleasant word, he spoke it indirectly by way of a hint, and never overtly. In his presence none interrupted another in talk. He would give advice in a serious manner, like a true well-wisher. He smiled more before his attendants, whose utterances took him aback and engaged more of his attention. He never burst into laughter so as to expose his molars.

THE PROPHET'S WIVES ¹

By HIS HOLINESS M. MUHAMMAD 'ALĪ, M.A., LL.B.

(Translator of the Holy Qur-án.)

PLURALITY of wives is met with in the lives of great religious personages. Abraham, who enjoys the reverence of more than half the human race, had more wives than one. Similar was the case with Jacob, Moses, and David. Solomon is reported to have carried the number to hundreds. These were the ancestors of Jesus. As to Jesus himself, he had not even one, as the Gospels show. So his example in the matter is out of the question. Should celibacy be made the ideal of life and become the rule, the world would come to an end before long. Thus it is obvious that the institution of polygamy has no intrinsic evil, and the mere fact that the Prophet had a number of wives is by no means objectionable; it was the custom of the patriarchs of old.

Up to a good old age of fifty-three, when one outgrows the passions of youth, the Prophet led his life

¹ Taken from his book, *Muhammad, The Prophet*, before 1924.

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in the company of but one wife, thereby setting an example that monogamy must be the rule of life under normal conditions. And as a matter of fact, this is exactly the purport of the Qur-ánic teachings. But as a universal religion, Islam must needs provide for all sorts of abnormalities. Polygamy is one such provision, permissible only when certain abnormal conditions call for it. When such conditions do arise, polygamy becomes a necessity, and if it is not allowed then, the result is immoral sexual intercourse. The society becomes corrupt. Unmarried mothers, and natural children become a part of it. Polygamy is, under such circumstances, the only effective preventive. Call it a necessary evil, or what you will, it is the only safeguard against moral turpitude. The Prophet was to be a perfect exemplar for mankind. Hence it was necessary that, notwithstanding his spending the whole of his youth—nay, even the major portion of his old age—with a single wife, he should have taken more wives than one, when war had increased the female element. We observe, that his disposition was averse to warfare. Full forty years before the Call he had been living in a land where sword was as freely wielded as a stick, which was a vast den of wild animals flying at one another's throats, where fighting and feuds were the order of the day, where there was no chance of survival for one who could not use the sword; yet not once did he deal a blow at an enemy. Even after the Call, when fighting had to be resorted to as a measure of self-defence, and the Prophet did in person take part in several battles, his sword never fell upon an enemy, excepting once at the battle of Uhud, when he had to use it against one of the enemies who rushed down upon him, charging him most furiously. Again, he was so peace-loving by nature that he preferred the truce of Hudaibiyya to bloodshed, though it treated the Muslims as a defeated party.

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Notwithstanding the fact that warfare was so alien to his nature, he was driven by sheer force of circumstance to take the field. For war is another necessary evil, and there comes a time when it cannot be avoided. The Holy Prophet could not be called a perfect exemplar had he omitted to set an example on the field of battle as well for the guidance of mankind. Circumstances arose which dragged him into the field to demonstrate how an ordinary soldier and a general should conduct himself. We observe also that in a hot country like Arabia he leads a spotlessly chaste life as a celibate till the age of twenty-five. His purity of character is of household fame. Then, he lives with one wife—and she too a widow, fifteen years his senior—till he is fifty. All these facts force upon us the conclusion that his continence was an impenetrable proof against lust and passion. Still at that old age, when sanity cannot possibly impeach him of sensuality, unless blinded by prejudice, he had to take more wives, so that this unavoidable aspect of human life might not be left undemonstrated in the life of the Perfect Exemplar.

What throws further light on the fact that all sorts of sordid cravings and passions, so characteristic of human nature, had been thoroughly extinguished in the case of the Prophet, is the exceeding simplicity of his mode of life. Notwithstanding his living in this world, he had little attachment to the charms it can present. From the cradle to the grave he passes through a diversity of circumstances—a diversity which can hardly be met with in the life of a single man. Orphanhood is the extreme of helplessness, while kingship, that of power. From an orphan, he climbs to the summit of royal glory, but that creates not the slightest change in his way of living. He lives on exactly the same kind of humble fare, wears the same simple dress, and in all particulars

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has the same mode of life as he had in the state of orphanhood. It is hard to give up a kingly throne and lead the life of a hermit; but it is far harder that one should wield the royal sceptre, yet at the same time lead a hermit's life; that one should possess power and pelf, yet spend it solely to promote the welfare of others; that one should ever have the most alluring attractions before one's eyes, yet never for one moment be captivated by them. When the Prophet had attained to absolute power over Medina and its suburbs, the furniture of his house was composed of an ordinary bed with a matting of palm-leaves and an earthen jug for water. Some nights he would go without food. For days, no fire would be lit in his house to prepare food, the whole family living on mere dates. There was no lack of means to live a life of ease and comfort. The public treasury was at his disposal. The well-to-do among his followers, who did not shrink from sacrificing their lives for his sake, would have been only too glad to provide him with every comfort of life, should he choose to avail himself of it. But worldly things carried little weight in his estimation. No mundane craving could ever prevail over him, neither in times of indigence nor of plenty. Just as he spurned at worldly things, such as power, pelf, and beauty, which the Quraish offered him when he was yet in a state of uttermost helplessness, so did he remain indifferent to them even now that God granted him all these things out of His own grace.

But a still more conclusive argument on the point is furnished by an incident alluded to in the Qur-*anic* verse quoted above. Shortly after their immigration into Medina, the condition of the Muslims improved. Business brought them prosperity. Besides, the booty that fell into their hands, together with the ransom money for the prisoners taken at the battle of Badr, made them comparatively ease-loving. So there was

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some change in the mode of their lives. But the household of the Prophet was absolutely unaffected by this change of fortune. Quite a human desire, however, crept into the hearts of the Prophet's wives, that like other Muslim families they too should avail themselves of their share of comforts. Accordingly, they approached the Prophet in a body to prevail upon him to allow them their legitimate share of worldly felicity. Thereupon came the Divine injunction directing the Prophet to tell his wives that they could not remain his wives, if they would cherish such sordid cravings. So they must choose between the two alternatives. They must either have worldly finery, or keep in the Prophet's household. Should they decide to have the former, they would have plenty of what they want, but would forthwith forfeit the honour of being the Prophet's wives. Can this be the reply of a sensual man? The foremost concern of such a fellow is to seek to satisfy the slightest whim of the objects of his affection. No doubt the Prophet cherished great love and regard for his wives. "The best of you," he is reported to have said, "is the one who treats his wife best." This illustrates his attitude towards womanhood. Notwithstanding this, however, when his wives come to him with what is quite a legitimate demand, they are coldly told that the Prophet's household and worldly comforts cannot go hand in hand. They must make a choice between the two. Does anyone who is a slave of his passions, disregard the wishes of his wives in such a manner? This shows beyond the shadow of a doubt how free the Prophet's heart was of all base and sensual thoughts. He is prepared to lose all his wives rather than yield to what he regards as unworthy of his wives—an inclination towards worldly things. Does it not conclusively show that the object of his marriages was anything but self-indulgence?

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It may be questioned what that object could possibly be. The Holy Qur-án answers it thus : " O Prophet ! say to your wives : If you desire this world's life and its ornaments, then come, I will give you a provision, and allow you to depart a goodly departing. And if you (the Prophet's wives) desire Allah and his Apostle and the latter abode, then surely Allah has prepared for the doers of good among you a mighty reward. And keep in mind what is recited in your houses of the communications of Allah and of the wisdom." ¹ Thus, it has been clearly set forth here that the Prophet's household was not the place for ministering to carnal cravings. The object was far more sublime—the preservation of what they heard and learnt through their frequent association with the Prophet for the benefit of mankind in general, and their own sex in particular. Hence they were required to spurn at all the charms of this life, and attend heart and soul to the fulfilment of the real object. What a lofty object ! There are a hundred-and-one morals of a man that do not find manifestation but in relation to the fair sex. Again, there are certain points of Islamic law which appertain to the female sex exclusively, and cannot find promulgation but through members of the same sex. In order that the world might not be deprived of those sayings and doings that could only find expression in the household, and in order that these things might be handed down to posterity, it was assigned to the Prophet's wives to watch all they heard or saw, and communicate the same to others. Thus the Prophet's marriages were intended as a means towards the realization of a religious object of great importance. There is many a point in Islamic code which the Prophet could not explain to women direct. He could do it through his wives. Traditions record many instances of women asking information

¹ The Holy Qur-án, xxxiii. 28-29, 34.

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on particular matters pertaining to their sex, and the Prophet referring them to some one of his wives who would give them the necessary information. Again, quite a lot of the Prophet's moral conceptions which could be brought into play only within the family circle have come down to us through his wives. To say that a single woman could do that is to overestimate the capacity of human memory. Persons of varied temperaments, and hence of different interests, were needed to duly comprehend and preserve the numerous things that came to their notice. Surely all that would have been far too much for a single human brain to hold. This is also one of the reasons why almost all the great prophets took more wives than one. This was all the more important in the case of the Last Prophet, in order that his words and deeds should be preserved and handed down in their details; for these were to serve as guidance to mankind for all ages to come. Thus it was a part of Divine wisdom to have so arranged to ensure the preservation of the Prophet's teachings, in precept as well as in practice.

Though the object of the Prophet's plurality of marriages was what has been stated above, the causes were manifold. The circle of Muslim brotherhood was, at the time, very narrow. The perpetual state of war created disparity between the male and female elements of the society. Husbands having fallen on the field of battle, their widows had to be provided for. But bread and butter is not the only provision needed in such cases, as is supposed by certain short-sighted statesmen. Their sex-requirements must be looked after, otherwise moral corruption would inevitably result, and ultimately lead to the ruin of a whole nation. But a reformer, with whom morals are all in all, could not content himself with making provisions merely for their eating and drinking. The Prophet was jealous of their chastity,

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far more than of their physical needs. It became, therefore, necessary to sanction polygamy under the circumstances. This is the reason that the Prophet had to take a number of wives in the Medinite period of his life. We must note that all of his wives were either widows or divorced women. Where self-indulgence is the motive, the choice seldom falls on widows. Passion must needs have virginity for its gratification. And there was no dearth of virgins. It would have been an enviable privilege for any Muslim to be the father-in-law of the Prophet. But the object was a far nobler one—the protection of the widows of his friends. Thus as many as five of his wives were such as had lost their husbands on the battlefield or otherwise. How difficult it was in those times to arrange a match for a Muslim woman is amply illustrated by the case of Hafsa, the widowed daughter of a man of 'Umar's influence and position, as already mentioned. So in polygamy alone lay the moral safety of the Muslim society situated as it then was.

Again, certain political reasons also led to some of the Prophet's marriages. That with Juwairiya, for instance, resulted in a great blessing. It did not only put an end to the bitter hostility of the Banu Mustaliq, but bound them in a strong tie of friendship to the Muslims. Moreover, as an immediate consequence of this, hundreds of prisoners of that tribe were instantaneously set at large. Was it anything but a religious end? Likewise the Jews were the deadliest enemies of Islam in Arabia. The Prophet attempted to conciliate them as well by taking a wife from among their nobility. In this case, however, the Jewish malice proved too strong for the conciliatory measures adopted by the Prophet. They persisted in their hostility, and never ceased concocting mischief against Islam. On his own part, however, the Prophet did his utmost to conciliate

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them. Maimuna was also a widow and came of an alien tribe, though the circumstances that led to her marriage with the Prophet were somewhat different. Her sister was already married to 'Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, and so when she offered her hand to the Prophet, the latter could not refuse it.

SUPERNATURALISM OF AL-QUR-ÁN

THE QUR-ÁN AND SOME MODERN ASTRONOMICAL THEORIES AND DISCOVERIES

By SYED MAQBOOL AHMAD, B.A.

AT the very outset I must confess my limitations in the subject I am proposing to deal with. In fact, I am as innocent of this abstruse science as many of my readers might be of Arabic and the Qur-án. As a layman I can only broadly distinguish between the theories propounded by Kepler and Ptolemy. But what I and every layman are certain of is that the heaven is not made of crystal or parchment, or the earth is not a flat middle storey, with a roof of the heaven above us and a Tartarus down below us, which was believed to be true as late as the fifteenth century in Europe. With the theory of a new heaven came the theory of a new earth; from the roundness of the earth, it developed into a revolving planet in the space. But all this knowledge has been vouchsafed to us very recently. Muhammad or his contemporaries in Arabia or elsewhere cannot be credited with the knowledge of heavens and earth we now possess. It follows, therefore, that the "Koran of Mahomet," if it at all touched the subject of astronomy, ought to have woefully floundered in the slough of ignorance. Such an aspect perhaps, then, could form a very competent acid test for one's belief in the divine origin of every book, although I doubt if a prejudiced mind would not even go to such lengths as to twist the words in very much the same way as the Hindus explain certain mantras of their Vedas to conform them to the latest discoveries.

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Again, if the Bible—in spite of the ridiculous statement in it to the effect that the sun ceased from moving when Joshua was leading the Israelites, an astronomically untenable observation—could be believed to be of divine origin, then any book which has the stamp of antiquity upon it can be considered as revealed. Fortunately, however, no book is ambitious enough to claim this title, although it is true its votaries might consider it to be all their own pious fancy dictated them. The Qur-án is, however, an exception; it itself declares its own origin in about a hundred places, and the point in issue about the Qur-án, then, is not, Who called the Qur-án a revealed book? but only, Why is it called a revealed book?

So in place of a rigid heaven of the ancient Greek philosopher in which stars are studded, we have now a fluid etheric space and our earth and other planets swimming in them. Now read this verse of the Qur-án:

“ Subhāna 'l-lazī khalāqa 'l-azwāja Kullahā mim mā tunbitu 'l-Arzu wa min anfusihi wa mim mā lā ya'lamūn. Wa āyatu l-lahumu 'l-Lail, naslakh minhu 'n-Nahāra fa'izā hum muzlimūn. Wa 'sh-Shamsu tajrī li Mustaqarrin lahā; zālika Taqdiru 'l-'Azīzi 'l-'Alīm.

“ Wa 'l-Qamara qaddarnāhu Manāzila hattā 'āda ka 'l-'Ujrūni 'l-Qadīm.

“ La 'sh-Shamsu janbaghī lahā an tudrika 'l-Qamara wa la 'l-Lailu sābiqū 'n-Nahār; Wa Kullun fi Falakin yasbahūn.

“ Wa āyatun 'l-lahum annā hamalnā zurriyyatahum fi 'l-Fulki 'l-Mashhūn.” (The Qur-án, xxxvi. 36-42.)

Its literal translation is as follows:

“ Glory be to Him Who created pairs of all things, of what the earth grows, and of their kind, and of what they do not know.

“ And a sign to them is the night: we draw forth from it the day, then lo! they are in the dark.

“ And the sun moves on its axis, that is the ordinance of the Mighty, the Knowing.

“ And the moon, we have ordained for its stages till it becomes again as old dry palm branch.

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“ Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day, and all float in the sphere. And a sign to them is that we bear their offspring in the laden ship and We have created for them the like of it what you ride on.”

The geologist, the chemist, the biologist, and the electrician might do well to take note of the first verse, although we are not here concerned with it. If they do not as yet know that there are male and female pairs in all the created beings of the world (we may call them positive and negative in magnetism and electricity), they may consult their greatest theorists; and they will, indeed, find for them some food for reflection in this short and simple verse. Now the Arabs of Muhammad's time did not know this truth, though they might have known the male and female species in certain plants; but it can be safely said they did not, certainly, know of positive and negative poles of magnetism and electricity. I will have to leave this interesting digression here. The Qur-án says, “ The sun moving on its axis.” Note the word *Mustaqarr*, which means in Arabic a fixed place, and the opposite is *Madār* or orbit. The sun moves on its fixed axis. This is a remarkable and very heretical statement, indeed, for the Arabia of thirteen hundred years ago!

We now come to the sentence, “ *Wa Kullun fī falakin yasbahūn* ”—and all these swimming in the sphere. This pertains to moon and all other planets. The swimming of any thing in heaven at once changes our conception of the heaven from a solid matter to a fluid substance; but did the Arabs know this *Falak of ether* of seven layers? Then mark the concluding verse: “ And a sign for them is that we bear their children in the laden ship, just as children of this planet carried in the laden ship they have as similar a means of transport as we have.” That planets have offsprings of theirs who ride on ships very much like ourselves is a very strange assertion indeed. But let us wait for its confirmation in some distant age, when we might be able to transmit etheric waves to Mars or to Jupiter.

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I have not twisted any word to make it suit my ideas. The text is before everyone, and it is quite open to everyone to compare the Arabic text with the translation given above.

Now let us turn to our own humble earth.

It is common knowledge that the earth is round, as much as that the world of thirteen centuries ago knew only a flat earth, bounded on its four sides by huge mountains which served as props over which the heaven was spread. With this idea in the minds of the ancients, one will expect that to them the east and the west must be single and not multiple; for a multiplicity of easts and wests is only possible when we conceive the earth as round. The Qur-án does not say that the earth is flat or round; it was not particularly concerned to teach geography to the Arabs. But incidentally it mentions something about it which sheds a flood of light. One might ask: Has not the Qur-án said that the earth is spread and that the mountains serve as pegs to keep the earth in its place? Yes, it has said so; but who can challenge the correctness of this? Is not the crust of the earth which we see quite flat and level as far as our sight can reach, only a thick layer of some couple of hundred miles or thereabout spread over the molten mass. The rocks do serve to make the crust steady on this molten mass, though they sometimes fail, and then earthquakes cause havoc.

I was talking of the Qur-án having foreseen the discovery of the roundness of the earth, and foretold us of some more easts.

Read the following verse:

“ Inna Ilāhakum lawāhid. Rabbu 's-Samāwāti wa 'l-Ardi wa mā bain humā wa Rabbu 'l-Mashāriq ” (The Qur-án, xxxvii. 4-6).

Literally it means:

“ Most surely your God is one, the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, and the Lord of many easts.”

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Yes, the Lord of New York, Greenwich, Calcutta, Peking, Manilla, and Timbuktu, whose easts are different. Then elsewhere in the pages of the Holy Qur-án we read:

“ Rabbu ’l-Mashriqain wa Rabbu ’l-Maghribain. Fabiay-yi ālā’i Rabbikumā tukazzibān ” (The Qur-án, The Beneficent, lv. 17-18).

Translation:

“ Lord of the two easts and the two wests. Which then of the bounties of your Lord will you reject? ”

We might take these two easts and two wests as being either the two winter and summer solstices, which is an observation much beyond the power of the ancient Arabs, or as being another east and west just on the other side of the hemisphere.

NOTES

The Abolition of Sunday in the Soviet Republic.

It is our firm conviction that the world, if at all it aspires to a stable state of affairs, will have to effect a radical pruning of existing conventions, and incorporate gradually and by way of substitution all those institutions which have been taught by Islam.

In proof of this assertion, which may seem strange to many who are unfamiliar with Islamic teaching, we have but to draw the attention of our readers to the bold step recently taken by the Soviet Government in the matter of the abolition of Sunday, a day which, as everyone is aware, is held in esteem by reason of an unintelligent, nay, sacrilegious fancy that God, after having worked for six long tiresome days, wanted to have a rest on the seventh.

Those who keep an eye on the trend of European thought, whether political, social, or religious, will find that many of its institutions introduced in the present unbalanced social organism of Europe have behind them exactly the same purpose as inspired these same steps when Islam took them fourteen hundred years ago, with this difference: that in Islam such steps have always been crowned with complete success,

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whereas in the present-day highly industrialized European world they are meeting with a partial success at best and not infrequently with disastrous failure. For it sometimes happens that such measures have gone to un contemplated extremes. Nevertheless, as experience is gained they are modified and controlled until they gradually withdraw exactly to the position marked out by Islam. As a case in point, take the abolition of capitalism, as it were, by a stroke of the Bolshevist pen. Experience showed that the machinery of the world could not function properly without the help of capital, consequently the idea of the entire abolition of capital was abandoned. And now we find that the situation is exactly in accordance with what Islam taught fourteen hundred years ago. That is to say, we are gradually recognizing the sanctity of private property controlled, of course, and regulated by the recognition of public rights over it. Had this experiment been tried on the lines of Islamic teaching, at least the world would have been saved the disillusionments of modification and failure, to say nothing of the untold miseries which great experiments must necessarily bring in their train. In Islam the sanctity of private property is duly respected, but at the same time the Sovereign right of the State—that is to say, of the people—is acknowledged by the imposition of a tax levied on all private property for the benefit of the poor. Further, land, the only developed means of production known to the world of Muhammad, was nationalized. If Muhammad were to appear to-day he would, on the analogy of the step he took fourteen hundred years ago, straightway nationalize all the forces of nature—rivers, mines, electricity, and the like. He would forbid monopoly. He would bring all gigantic undertakings under the control of the State—and he would do this in order to vindicate the Sovereign right of the people over all natural resources; so that the people may have their due share in the bounties of nature, and the wealth of the nation be saved from concentration in the hands of the few.

Now the repercussions of this step which abolished capital were great and far-reaching. For instance, we find that the experiment, even though modified in the land of its origin, is still cropping up again and again in one form or another

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under the guise, now of a demand for rationalization and high wages in England, now of discontent and strikes in industrial areas, now of Fascism and dictatorships in divers countries. The idea all along underlying these manifestations is that of preventing wealth from becoming centralized in the hands of the few, and to tone down the too sharply defined differences existing between the various sections of society.

Similarly, we are sure that the repercussions following the abolition of Sunday will be very great. Some Christians will doubtless look askance at this step of the Soviet Republic, and regard it as an attack on religion; but how it can be considered such passes our understanding. There would be some point in the contention if we were to assume that religion is synonymous with that dogmatized Christianity which is trying to bolster up false doctrines; and this Soviet action may perhaps rouse from their slumbers those who have not as yet become awake to the effeteness of Christian doctrine.

Islam, like the Soviet Republic, holds no particular day so sacred as to be taboo for every sort of work; but, unlike the Soviet Republic, regards every day as sacred in the sense that God should be worshipped every day. The Qur-án expresses itself on the subject of Friday thus:

“ O you who believe! when the call is made for prayer on Friday, then hasten to the remembrance of Allah and leave off traffic; that is better for you, if you know.

“ But when the prayer is ended, *then disperse in the land and seek* ¹ of Allah's grace, and remember Allah much, that you may be successful.” (lxii. 9-10.)

Friday was established as one of the days on which all believers should make a point of repairing to the mosques in their respective districts, thus gaining the opportunity of knowing each other better and of being able to discuss among themselves the social, religious, and political questions affecting their welfare, although attendance at the mosques daily was considered to be equally commendable. Friday, however, was not held so sacred as not to allow the Muslim to work or take part in innocent amusement or healthy recreation. This does not mean that there is no holiday or day of rest in Islam.

¹ Italics are ours.—ED. I.R.

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There is and there ought to be, but not on religious grounds, as Christianity would have it.

This is another example of the manner in which the world is tending towards the ideals of Islam.

British Muslim Society, London.

In spite of the summer season, when holiday-making is in full swing, the British Muslim Society has been very busy in spreading the message of Islam, Sunday lectures being held regularly at the London Muslim Prayer House in co-operation with the Woking Muslim Mission.

Mr. Habeebullah Lovegrove, the Society's energetic secretary, arranged for two lectures to be delivered before the Clapham Spiritualist Association, one by Maulvi 'Abdu 'l-Majid, M.A., Imām of the Mosque, Woking, on "The Contribution of Islam towards the Solution of Racial Problems"; the other by Mr. 'Abdu 'l-Khāliq Khan, B.A., of the Mosque, Woking, on "Şufism." Both the lectures were very much appreciated by the audiences.

Another lecture was delivered by Mr. 'Abdu 'l-Majid, of the Mosque, Woking, before the Crowstone Young Men's Association, Westcliff-on-Sea, on "The Problem of Wealth, Islam, and Christianity." Some members of the audience admitted that Islam did tackle the all-important question of wealth, on which Christianity is silent. The Imām pointed out that the fact that Christianity or the parables of Jesus Christ did not condemn the acquisition of riches, and that the sayings of Jesus Christ pointed out clearly that money should be freely given away in charity, did not constitute such action or conduct a feature peculiar to Christianity. He further remarked that enunciation of such a simple truth as that which insists on the right use of wealth is by no means worthy of the great personality of Jesus. Everyone knows it. But what everyone does now know is how to use it rightly; and for this we require the guidance of a Prophet. Whether Jesus did give any explicit fundamental ruling on the point is a question to which we get no answer from the Gospels. Whose fault it is, whether of the chroniclers of the life of Jesus Christ or of Jesus Christ, we cannot definitely say. But it would be more

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in conformity with the dignity of Jesus to believe that he did give such a ruling, but that his chroniclers neglected to record it. The Imām then detailed briefly the rules and regulations which Islam has laid down for the use of wealth.

Another no less important social feature was an "At Home" at the London Muslim Prayer House, arranged in honour of Nawab Sir Zulfiqār 'Alī Khan, C.S.I., Member of the Indian Legislative Assembly, on July 14, 1929. The Nawab Sahib addressed the Society on "Church and State in Islam."

Alcohol, Divorce, and Efficiency.

The sixty-eighth chapter of the Holy Qur-ān opens with the words: "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Consider the inkstand and the pen and what they write, by the grace of your Lord you are not mad. And surely you shall have a reward never to be cut off."

The Qur-ān here calls our attention to a fact at once eloquent and suggestive. It says that the Qur-ān will continue to occupy a unique position among all books written and to be written, and that there will always be a conclusive proof from what is written therein, that the Prophet Muḥammad, to whom it was revealed, was not a madman. Now this is no mean boast. As knowledge advances, the importance of the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad is shining more and more. There was a time when the Holy Prophet Muhammad was described, not only by his own people, but also by peoples of other countries, as a madman. But the truth of his message and the wisdom of his teaching are not only daily spreading fast, but are being widely understood and appreciated. This is evident from the rapid progress which Islam is making wherever an organized propaganda has been started for disabusing the minds of the people from ancient prejudice and ignorance.

On the question of alcohol as a beverage Professor Leonard Hill, director of the Department of Applied Physiology of the National Institute for Medical Research, in his presidential address at the annual conference of the Sanitary Inspectors' Association, shows us a sidelight which once again goes a long way to establish and strengthen the claim of the Holy

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Qur-án that with the advance of knowledge, the world will recognize the greatness of the Holy Prophet's personality. It had been proved, he said, by exact research that alcohol in doses above small ones, especially when taken on an empty stomach, diminished skill and efficiency. For motor drivers and air pilots alcohol was therefore dangerous. It was thought to exhilarate, but it really lessened control and loosened the tongue.

In connection with these remarks the relation of divorce to drink may with benefit be considered. "The statistics of divorce cases in the different States of the U.S.A. in pre-Prohibition days show that a very large number of them were due to drunkenness. . . . Judge William M. Gemmill, a former Judge of the Court of Domestic Relations, Chicago, describing the causes that led to divorces before the Prohibition Law came into force, says that at least 75 per cent. of family desertions were due, either directly or indirectly, to the use of intoxicating drinks, and that by record 46 per cent. of all the cases coming to that court were due directly to drink." ¹

In the same way, when we consider any institution of Islam or any precept or law of the Qur-án, we shall invariably find that instead of becoming obsolete, as is the case in other religions, or harmful, they are, one and all, being proved to be the right principles.

"The Society for the Relief of the Arab Distressed in Palestine."

Everyone is aware of the present deplorable crisis in Palestine, which has rendered many Arabs destitute. To feed and clothe those who in defence of their Holy Land and their lawful rights have shed their blood in a struggle caused by the greed of sister communities, an Arab Association has been founded. This Association approaches the Muslim world inviting Muslims to express their immortal sense of brotherhood by contributing liberally for the relief of their distressed and starving brethren in the riot-stricken areas of the Holy Land.

The following gentlemen have nobly taken upon them-

¹ *The Sunrise*, Qadian, India, for Dec. 22, 1928, and Jan. 7, 1929.

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selves the onerous task of relief amongst their destitute countrymen:—President: Sayyid Muhammad Āmin Husainī; Vice-Presidents: Ya'qūb Effendi Farrāj and Wāhid Hilmi Pāsha; Members: 'Auni Bey 'Abdu 'l-Hādī, Hanna Effendi Milāda, Fakhrī Bey Nashāshībī, Shaikh Mahmūd Effendi Dujānī, 'Abdu 'l-Qādir Effendi al-'Afifi, Zakī Effendi Nasība, Dr. Fauti Farīj, and Ahmad Namar Effendi as-Shahābī; Treasurer: Abdu 'l-Hamīd Effendi Shūmān; Accountant: Fayyāz Effendi Al-Khazrā; and Secretary: Sayyid Rāsim Al-Khālidi.

All correspondence and contributions should be directed to: The Secretary, "The Society for the Relief of the Distressed Arabs in Palestine," P.O. Box 639, Jerusalem, Palestine.

CORRESPONDENCE

A LETTER FROM LORD HEADLEY TO THE COLONIAL OFFICE,
LONDON, ON BEHALF OF THE BRITISH MUSLIM SOCIETY,
LONDON.

October 10, 1929.

SIR,—

The following cannot fail to be of the greatest interest to all those who have followed the more recent history of Palestine; in the summary Mr. Gordon-Canning has been at some pains to present a very concise picture of the situation as it appears to him, and I consider a careful perusal of the facts, which have been collated with great care, will amply repay any student of this very complicated social and political problem:

(1) *Facts of the Past.*

(a) Arabs have not ceased to protest against the Balfour Declaration and Article 2 of the Mandate for the last *eleven* years.

(b) For ten years the administration of Palestine has failed, however impartially worked, to satisfy *either* Zionist or Arab.

(c) For ten years a minority of about 100,000 (I do not include the pre-war Jewish population) has been attempting to dominate a majority of about three-quarters of a million Arabs, and to obtain, by means of world propaganda and strong

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international Jewish financial support, political and economic rights and privileges not their due.

(d) Jews and Arabs who in former times lived in peace, are now estranged and hostile caused by the influx and activities of 100,000 Zionists.

(e) The 1915 pledges made by the British Government to the Arabs and the Allied Declaration of 1918 have not been honoured.

(2) *Facts of To-day.*

(a) The Jewish and Arab organizations, supporting their respective demands, have to-day become more powerful than ever, and refuse to yield the smallest fraction of what the other side requests or demands.

(b) The Zionists have become more arrogant in their demands, and more and more tried to interpret the Balfour Declaration on the basis of its *opening* sentence and the blindness of its final one.

(c) The situation to-day, after ten years of British administration, has reached such a point of bitter exasperation that only British armed forces can prevent bloodshed and riot.

(3) *Facts for the Commission.*

(a) That the Wailing Wall disturbances and arguments are but minor episodes in the causes of Arab-Zionist hostility.

(b) That the Arabs are eternally determined to refuse recognition both of Article 2 of the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration in other than the cultural sense.

(c) That certain economical concessions gained by Jewish representatives have reacted most unfavourably on the Arab mind, and that in the recent adjudication of the Dead Sea concession the terms show a scandalous misappropriation of Arab property and deliberate blindness to Arab rights.

(d) That the Arabs, both Muslim and Christian, are closely united in their protests against Zionism.

(e) That Mr. Montefiore's words, quoted recently by the *Daily Mail*, are being fulfilled.

(f) That the Arabs of Palestine possess the solid support of the Arabs in Iraq, Syria, Trans-Jordania, and Egypt.

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(4) *What is to be Done.*

(a) The Balfour Declaration to be interpreted only in the cultural sense.

(b) The creation of an Arab administration, helped by the British, with ample Jewish representation and safeguards.

(c) The final aim to be achieved being—the creation of an Arab Federated State (see *Contemporary Review*, August 1929).

The just settlement of this Middle Eastern problem is an imperative necessity for the welfare of the British Empire, lying as the Arab world does across our Indian and Far Eastern communication.

HEADLEY.

Lord Headley also desires us to forward the following copy of a statement he has just forwarded to the Colonial Office:

“ The British Muslim Society, recognized as a society for religious purposes only, watches with grave anxiety the unsatisfactory situation in Palestine.

“ The Society desires in no way to mix itself with political activities, but it cannot refrain from expressing sentiments of deep sympathy with its co-religionists in that country.

“ The Society desires to draw the attention of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the fact that the British Government's pledges to the Arab Nation in 1915 were anterior to the Balfour Declaration, and that the Allied Declaration of November 1918, addressed to the Arab world, has not been fulfilled.

“ The British Muslim Society, together with the 110,000,000 Muslims in the British Empire, are anxiously awaiting the fulfilment of these pledges—having faith in the ultimate justice of the British People. Doubtless we are trusted, and ‘ Insaf Kerna Hoga ’ has been proudly spoken by Indians and British when important transactions have been taking place.”

Friday Prayer and Sermon.—At the London Muslim Prayer House—111, Camden Hill Road, Notting Hill Gate, London—every Friday at 1 p.m. **Sunday Lectures** at 5 p.m. **Qur-án and Arabic Classes**—every Sunday at 5.30–7 p.m.

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